

INSIDE VIRGINIA

VIRGINIA BUSINESS NETWORK OFFERS ASSISTANCE FOR DISABLED WORKFORCE

The Virginia Business Leadership Network (VABL N) is a business led organization created to provide training and education about the employment of individuals with disabilities. The mission of the VABL N is to increase career opportunities for individuals with disabilities and to develop employer understanding of issues and obstacles these individuals face in the workplace.

As part of a national employer led non-profit organization, the US Business Leadership Network, the VABL N and its member businesses are part of a network of employers who believe in inclusion and offering a level playing field for all individuals.



Too often businesses react to the possibility of hiring an individual with a disability with fear, questions about accommodations/liability and generally inaccurate ideas about how the disability will impact job performance. The VABL N gives its members the opportunity to hear about real life experiences from businesses, in an open and non-threatening atmosphere, that have successfully placed individuals with disabilities in a variety of positions.

There are a number of programs developed and sponsored by the VABL N including: Disability Friendly Business Program which recognizes businesses that strive

to make accommodations for, provide employment to and encourage awareness about individuals with disabilities; Virginia New Freedom Employment Initiative Award which recognizes small, medium and large employers that have made exceptional strides in employing individuals with disabilities; Mentoring Day which provides an opportunity for students with disabilities to spend a day working one-to-one with a mentor in the business community; and "Mentoring Matters" which is a work-based mentoring program for students with disabilities.

For more information about the VABL N, please visit our website at www.vabl n.org or contact Dana Rosanelli, (804) 782-7181 or via e-mail dana.rosanelli@suntrust.com.

AN UPDATE ON SWAM PROCUREMENT IN THE COMMONWEALTH

by Gov. Mark R. Warner



One of my biggest challenges as Governor has been increasing the participation of small, woman and minor-

ity-owned business (SWAM) procurement in state government. This isn't uncommon - many other state and local governments have been struggling with this issue as well. We've been working hard to improve our performance, not only because it will provide economic development for many of our communities, but because it's the right thing to do.

For a long time we've only had anecdotal evidence about Virginia's record working with minority companies. So we launched a comprehensive disparity study, and we got the objective results that proved what everyone had long suspected. We're now working hard to turn it around - but I know we still have a long way to go. I've tried to make SWAM procurement a priority for Virginia government. But this type of culture change takes more than just words. In Virginia, we are making progress, but the progress isn't coming easy and is going to take a serious, long-term effort.

However, if there's one thing I've learned as Governor, it's that there isn't a silver bullet that will solve complex problems like this one. We're trying to reverse the Commonwealth's record on SWAM procurement, and change will come through many

Gov. Mark R. Warner cont'd

VIRGINIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR TO BE HELD SEPTEMBER 28, 2005

DBA will host "From Campus to Community: University Partners in Economic Development" - a quarterly seminar to be held at the newly-opened Inn at Virginia Tech and Skelton Conference Center in Blacksburg, Virginia on Wednesday, September 28th. The seminar will explore the successes of higher education partnerships in business communities around the Commonwealth. Panelists will include industry, academic and economic development representatives to discuss educational

INSIDE VIRGINIA
is an informational
e-publication intended
to provide Virginia
businesses with a
competitive advantage.
Brought to you by the



THIS ISSUE:

VABL N Offers Assistance

Letter From The Governor

VA ED Seminar

ED Corner

New DBA Team Members

Ask VBIC

VIED Event

Calendar

Partnering Corner

VTCAF Event

Recent VSBFA Approvals

ARC Funding For Appalachia

VA Quality Conference &
Forum for Excellence

cooperation in the retention and recruitment of businesses. A reception will also be held on September 27th from 6-8 p.m. For hotel reservations contact the Inn at Virginia Tech at 540-231-8000 or toll-free 877-200-3360 and identify yourself as part of the Virginia

Economic Development Seminar by Friday, September 9th. For updates on the seminar, visit www.dba.virginia.gov/events/event.asp?EVENT_ID=2605.

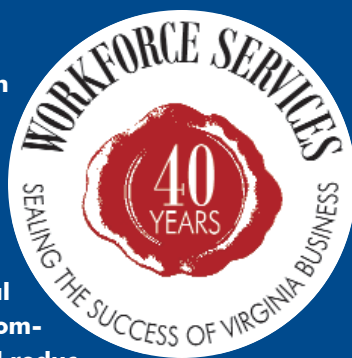
"From Campus -



- To Community"

EDCORNER

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF service to the Commonwealth this fall, the Workforce Services (WFS) program at DBA continues to be the most frequently requested economic development incentive in Virginia. In Fiscal Year '05, WFS assisted 520 companies, offering services and reducing their recruitment and training costs associated with 10,135 net new jobs and the retraining of 3,162 Virginia workers.



Two changes were recently made to the WFS program criteria: 1) The program is now limited to the following business sectors: manufacturing, distribution centers, call centers, information technology (business-to business) and corporate headquarters for companies with multiple facilities. 2) Companies accessing the Small Business New Jobs Program must create 5 net new jobs within a 12-month period. Visit www.dba.virginia.gov/workforce for complete program criteria.

Since Fiscal Year '02, WFS has faced a 57% decrease in funding, yet has seen a 91% increase in its project load. The demand for the WFS incentive has continued to be very strong for the state's economic development projects. In order to keep Virginia's economic development marketing program competitive with other states, WFS is seeking additional funds through the budgeting process.

WFS deeply appreciates the continued support of our local, regional and state economic development partners. We look forward to working together to ensure that this effective incentive remains available and valuable to your business clients.

DBA WELCOMES NEW TEAM MEMBERS -

VERNITA BOONE recently joined DBA's Existing Business Services division as an administrative assistant where, in addition to providing administrative support, she will field requests for assistance received through the Virginia Business Information Center (VBIC). She previously worked for the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services as an administrative assistant to the

director of the Division of Consumer Protection. She has been working for the Commonwealth for nine years.

LINDA BUMGARNER will be procuring all goods and services for DBA as the agency's procurement officer. Linda is a certified contracting officer and has been working for the Commonwealth for more than 15 years. Before coming to DBA, she was a procurement officer for the Virginia Dept. of Housing and Community Development.

Gov. Mark R. Warner cont'd

smaller achievements, not one large victory.

That's why I'm excited to promote the multi-prong approach we're taking to increasing SWAM participation in state procurement. I recently announced the launch of a simple, online application for businesses to become certified as a small, woman, or minority-owned business. This will make certification and recertification more accessible and more convenient for SWAMs seeking to compete for the \$5 billion the Commonwealth spends each year on goods and services.

Beyond certification, the Virginia Department of Business Assistance (DBA) has been working closely with DMBE, the Virginia Department of General Services (DGS) and other state agencies with buying power to educate businesses about state government purchasing and accessing contracting opportunities within their market. DBA launched "Selling to the Commonwealth" in September 2004, an outreach workshop series emphasizing training and supplier-buyer networking to forge and foster new vendor relationships between businesses and Commonwealth procurement officers. Throughout FY05, DBA has hosted workshops in nine regions around the state and supported over a dozen vendor fairs - connecting more than 2300 business owners to state purchasing officers.

As a follow-up, DMBE has hired several procurement advocates whose job it is to assist Commonwealth

procurement officers in finding certified vendors and meeting SWAM objectives.

These new initiatives are just some steps in the right direction. They can help us reach more businesses, diversify our vendor pool, and strengthen our local economies. Now, new or returning vendors can begin the certification process online, have their SWAM status verified, and be trained to effectively use our eVA electronic procurement system to make themselves known to state and local procurement officers.

With the new online application, businesses can apply for SWAM certification, as well as edit and update previously submitted information to recertify. DMBE partnered with the Virginia Information Providers Network of VITA, or VIPNet, to develop the service.

By making the SWAM certification process easier and more user-friendly, and by making training and networking available locally, we're keeping the promise of equal opportunity, by ensuring Virginia's diverse population access to resources and assistance. I'm pleased to be able to announce this, and I hope that many of you who haven't taken the time to apply for SWAM certification will take advantage of this opportunity.

To access the application, please visit www.dmba.virginia.gov/services.html. For information on upcoming "Selling to the Commonwealth" workshops, visit www.dba.virginia.gov.

**The Commonwealth of Virginia
Department of Minority Business Enterprise**



Department of General Services



ASK VBIC

Many calls to the Virginia Business Information Center provide a service to Virginia businesses.

I'm from National Bank and I need to verify a business license for a loan application.

VBIC helps loan officers verify SCC filings, business licenses, or other registrations that help speed loan application approval. VBIC also helps loan officers understand unusual situations, such as the fact that sole proprietor businesses in Virginia counties that do not require a business license cannot be verified the same way as other business entity types. All VBIC verifications are completed "invisibly," without bothering the business owner.

Is X Handyman Service a licensed contractor?

Citizens call VBIC all the time if they are unsure how to verify if a contractor that has given them an estimate is licensed by the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR). Customers prefer to do business with a licensed contractor and contractors that are licensed and have no record of disciplinary action gain a real advantage. VBIC provides the information or explains to the citizen how to access it online.

Are you the Better Business Bureau?

No, VBIC isn't the Better Business Bureau (BBB), but VBIC directs citizens to their closest BBB office and also offers guidance on BBB and allied business reference services.

VIRGINIA BUSINESS INFORMATION CENTER

(804) 371-0438 OR (866) 248-8814 toll free
vbic@dba.virginia.gov

THE VIRGINIA INSTITUTE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (VIED)

will be held October 23-27, 2005 at the Inn at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg. Coordinated by the Office of Economic Development at Virginia Tech, this training opportunity is designed to give local government officials and community leaders more knowledge of state agency programs and community economic development. The topics cover an analysis of current economic trends, planning, product development, workforce development, finance, and marketing, along with overviews of various industry niches and the roles of different state agencies in economic development. For more information on this year's program, visit www.conted.vt.edu/vied.



CALENDAR

09.12 to 09.13.05	
VA Local Government Financing Conference	- Hampton
09.14 to 09.16.05	
VEDA Fall Conference	- Virginia Beach
09.15.05	
Biz Linc	- Richmond
09.28.05	
VA Economic Development Seminar	- Blacksburg
10.23 to 10.27.05	
VIED	- Blacksburg
11.13 to 11.15.05	
VA Association of Counties Annual Conference	- Bath County
Visit www.dba.virginia.gov for more details and other events.	

PARTNERING CORNER

AGENCIES AND LOCALITIES TEAM UP ON E-COMMERCE AND DIVERSITY INITIATIVES

Intra-agency collaboration has been the cornerstone of DBA's new "Selling To The Commonwealth" vendor education and outreach program. A vendor-training slide presentation, co-authored by DBA and Department of General Services (DGS), in August of 2004, was the first step in a team effort to educate the business community about Virginia's procurement process. In the months following, through the end of fiscal 2005, DBA took the slide show on the road to willing hosts to reach localities with a message about Commonwealth's e-Commerce and Diversity initiatives, producing eight workshops, and providing the eVA presentation at 15 additional supplier diversity events.

DBA's "portable" vendor training workshop, incorporated a third state agency, the Department of Minority Business Enterprise (DMBE), to provide a SWAM certification presentation. A key ingredient of the workshop includes a valuable networking session comprised of state and local government procurement officials, affording businesses the opportunity to connect with decision makers in the purchasing process. Workshop hosts have included universities, community colleges, Virginia Small Business Development Centers, local chambers, and local and regional economic developers. This lively mixture of many business assistance and economic development partners puts businesses face-to-face with valuable partners, all of whom contribute to economic prosperity for the Commonwealth.

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has also been a steady asset in DBA's traveling workshop series, by sending the appropriate District Procurement staff to exhibit or serve as panel speakers at every event. In turn, DBA has exhibited and provided vendor assistance on site at several VDOT district level vendor fairs.



By leveraging the talents across agency lines, these Commonwealth partners are not only moving Virginia forward in e-commerce and supplier diversity, but adding tremendous value to the business assistance process by folding in multiple resources and helping vendors grow revenues by accessing new markets.

For more information on "Selling To The Commonwealth", upcoming supplier diversity events, contact, Loretta Vines, 804-371-0357 or Loretta.vines@dba.virginia.gov. For the SUPPLIER/BUYER EXCHANGE newsletter, visit at <http://www.dba.virginia.gov/mwbusinesses/Procurement%20Newsletter%20Summer%202005.pdf> events/event.asp?EVENT_ID=2605.

VIRGINIA'S TECHNOLOGY CAPITAL ACCESS FORUM SCHEDULE FOR OCTOBER



There is no better time than the present to be a part of the progression of Virginia's innovation economy. To further this goal, New Virginia Corridor Technology Council (NCTC) and Virginia Tech and are hosting the third annual Virginia's Technology Capital Access Forum (VTCAF) on October 10th and 11th at the Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center. The objective of this forum is to advance Virginia's innovation economy by putting technology and innovation entrepreneurs statewide in touch with capital providers from Virginia and the entire Mid-Atlantic Region.

VTCAF is an annual, super-regional event that is geared to attract technology companies. This year's event will capitalize on the success of prior years and re-cast the VTCAF mold. For more information visit www.capitalaccessforum.com/ or contact Beverly Turner, Outreach Program Development at (540) 231-2188 or e-mail: beverly@vt.edu.

RECENT VSBFA APPROVALS

The Virginia Small Business Financing Authority recently approved \$1.1 million in financing and assistance to aid in the creation of nearly 100 new jobs across the Commonwealth. "Small businesses are major contributors to Virginia's economy," said Governor Mark R. Warner. "These loans are an important source of capital to help viable small businesses get off the ground and succeed in Virginia."

Approvals were for Hill Mandolins, Inc., a start-up

manufacturer of hand-made mandolins in Dickenson County; Prototype Productions, LLC, a manufacturer specializing in prototype development, project management and building design in Loudon County; Sun Dog Productions, LLC, a hand-dyed casual wear manufacturer in Fairfax County; Magnox Acquisition Inc., a manufacturer of nanoparticle products in Pulaski County; Shin Family, LLC, Alexandria, and Suffolk Quality Cleaner, Suffolk - both dry cleaning operations.

The VSBFA also approved an inducement resolution for Southern Virginia University in Buena Vista to assist the University in expanding its educational programs and its student housing facilities.

For more information on financing approvals or programs offered to small businesses through the VSBFA, visit www.dba.virginia.gov.

GOVERNOR DIRECTS ARC FUNDS TO EXPAND TOURISM AND TECHNOLOGY IN APPALACHIA VA

Governor Mark R. Warner recently recommended \$240,350 in Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) funding for eight projects in Southwest Virginia. The ARC-funded projects will provide citizens and businesses with greater access to technology and further develop the region's tourism potential.

Governor Warner recently served two terms as the ARC States' Co-chairman. In that capacity, Governor Warner hosted two ARC annual meetings - one focused on bringing broadband technology to the region and the other highlighting strategies to develop Appalachia's cultural and heritage tourism assets. For detailed information, visit www.governor.virginia.gov/Press_Policy/Releases/2005/Jun05/0624.htm.



2005 VIRGINIA QUALITY CONFERENCE AND FORUM FOR EXCELLENCE

Hundreds of Virginia executives and quality professionals will gather on October 26, 2005 at the Williamsburg Marriott to hear best practices and continue the learning path toward improved performance and results during the 2005 Quality Conference and Forum for Excellence. The 2005 award recipients of the U.S. Senate Productivity and Quality Award (SPQA) for Virginia will also be presented at the luncheon.

SPQA has stood for performance excellence in all Virginia organizations for more than 22 years. The program helps organizations achieve performance excellence through a process of training and education, evaluation, feedback, and recognition. Many top Virginia organizations are using the SPQA performance criteria and core values, modeled after the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, as a proven business model and even a stepping stone to apply for the national award.

SPQA is also seeking financial and in-kind sponsorships that will allow the organization to continue spreading the SPQA performance excellence model across Virginia. If you are interested in learning more about applying for the award or supporting the program with a tax-deductible donation, please contact SPQA's Executive Director, Bob Bowles, at (757) 523-6762 or director@spqa-va.org. For more information on the conference, sponsorship opportunities, and this year's award recipients, visit www.spqa-va.org.



ARE YOU IN THE DARK ABOUT YOUR NEXT BUSINESS MOVE?

THEN LET US SHED SOME LIGHT!

We are the Virginia Department of Business Assistance and our business is your success! DBA serves as the business community's voice, partner and representative to state government. We are your link to countless resources throughout the Commonwealth and beyond. We can help your business by:

Obtaining Capital, Workforce Recruiting & Training for eligible businesses

Serving as a Resource for Business Information & Assistance

Networking & Knowledge through DBA Events

For more information on these services or general business questions contact our:

VIRGINIA BUSINESS INFORMATION CENTER at
804-371-0438 | 1-866-248-8814 ^{mt} _{fre} | VBIC@DBA.VIRGINIA.GOV